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THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON MORAL EDUCATION.

M. E. SADLER.

I.

THREE separate streams of effort led to the holding of the first International Congress on Moral Education in London last September. The idea of such a congress, and the determination to hold one, came in the first place to prominent workers in the International Union of Ethical Societies. Had it not been for the faith and zeal of Professor Foerster of the University of Berlin, and of Mr. Gustav Spiller, the secretary of the Union, the recent congress would not have been convened. It was they who framed the first outline of the plan and effectively urged its acceptance. And, from first to last, Mr. Spiller gave his strength and knowledge without stint to the work of organization. But secondly, the previous labors of the Moral Instruction League, in pressing upon the thoughts of the public in Great Britain the supreme importance of effective moral and civic education in all schools, had prepared English opinion to welcome such a gathering, and had disposed the newspapers to attach due importance to its deliberations. It would have proved difficult, if not impossible, to organize the congress successfully this autumn in London, without the nucleus of energetic workers furnished by the committee of the Moral Instruction League, and without the ready coöperation of the League's secretary, Mr. Harrold Johnson, whose courage, idealism and practical promptitude have for some years been directed to a propaganda of the idea of systematic moral instruction. Thirdly, the dangers of division and of hurtful controversy, which in other circumstances would have been found serious, were averted by the fact that, since the

autumn of 1906, a large and influential committee, fully representative of all shades of conviction and of educational experience, had been engaged in a systematic inquiry into methods of moral instruction and training in schools in Great Britain and elsewhere. In the work of this committee (which sprang from the initiative of Dr. Paton, of Nottingham, Mr. Clifford W. Barnes, of Chicago, Mr. Harrold Johnson, Mr. W. T. Stead and one or two others) men and women of very different schools of thought had been brought into intimate relationship. By careful study and frank discussion of the complex and many-sided problem of moral training, they had discerned the possibility of a synthesis between some seemingly contrariant ideals—a synthesis which might compose parts of the present controversy without any surrender of principle. When invited to support this plan of holding the congress, those who had borne the chief part in this long investigation threw themselves (on being assured that the basis of the discussions would be one of fairness to all parties concerned) unreservedly into the further work of helping to organize the gathering. The result of this joint action on the part of three influential bodies of opinion (not wholly distinct from one another, but very far from identical in personnel or in purpose) was that the congress commanded a wide range of international affiliations, the zeal and influence of the Moral Instruction League and the good will and respectful attention of the great religious bodies and of the associations of teachers in Great Britain.

The success of the congress exceeded general expectation. The numbers attending were large, as many as fourteen hundred tickets being sold. At least eighteen nations, more than thirty universities and over a hundred educational organizations were officially represented at it. The general public took considerable interest in its proceedings. The debates were for the most part weighty from the educational or administrative experience of those who engaged in them. Speeches in any one

of the three languages officially recognized at the congress—English, French and German—were evidently followed with close attention by a considerable number of those present. There was no serious disproportion between the two sexes in the large audiences which, to a striking degree, maintained their size and interest to the last. In spite of the fact that during the earlier months of the year, London had already been the meeting-place of ten international congresses, this (the last) made a deeper impression upon public attention than any of its predecessors. Many of the papers submitted to the congress were of high merit, and an unusually large number of the speakers in the debates excelled in terse and lucid statement, some rising to a memorable level of moving eloquence. The plan of having a different chairman at each session gave variety to the proceedings, while the unremitting attendance and attention of the vice chairman secured continuity of experience in conducting the discussions and gradually established a tradition of wise procedure. In this and other connections especially valuable service was rendered to the congress by Mrs. Bryant, Professor Muirhead and Professor Adamson.

At every congress or similar gathering, those present are influenced (often more than they realize) by a prevailing spirit which forms itself in the assembly and gradually imparts a tone to its proceedings. On this occasion such a spirit quickly made itself felt, and has left behind it many precious memories. The spirit of the congress was one of intense sincerity, combined with forbearance and mutual respect. The truth was bravely told, but told with delicate regard for opposing convictions. Some of the questions under consideration touched the very core of spiritual experience. But there was no wrangling, no intolerance, no anger. Among those who took part in, or listened to the debates, there was no general agreement. On the contrary, on many fundamental points there was profound divergence of settled prin-

ciple. But a spirit of reverence and of respectful regard for the convictions of others prevailed in the congress, and united most of those present in a common search for truth and in a desire to reach a right judgment upon the momentous questions under review. The result was that many who entered the congress with distrust of the intentions of some of those holding opinions conflicting with their own, left it with widened sympathies and with the knowledge that they had learnt much from those who differed from them. To have thus assuaged the temper of controversy, to have softened much deep-seated prejudice and to have disposed some of the champions of contending principles to search for an honest synthesis of apparently opposite truths, is a happy issue upon which the originators of the congress may look back with thankfulness.

Such a result is never reached without careful and long-continued preparation. An achievement of this kind is rarely, if ever, improvised. The preparative work of the congress was well and patiently done. Mr. Spiller, Mr. Harrold Johnson, Miss Alice Ravenhill, Miss Wells, Mr. Bompas Smith, Miss Jourdain, Mr. Harvey and other investigators, appointed by the committee of the inquiry into moral instruction and training, had in the course of hundreds of interviews in Germany, Switzerland, France and Great Britain helped in focusing the thoughts of teachers in all types of schools upon the questions which were subsequently included in the program of the congress. The publications of the Moral Instruction League had familiarized great numbers of British teachers and education authorities with many of the issues which came up for consideration in the course of the debates. And two books, opportunely published before the meeting of the congress, had provided material for study and reflection on the practical and theoretical bearings of the problem of moral education. One of these, published by Messrs. Longmans early in September, was the report of the international inquiry into moral instruction and train-

ing;¹ the other, issued a fortnight later, was the volume containing the chief papers prepared by various writers for consideration at the congress itself.²

But the most careful preparation cannot insure success for a congress unless public opinion is ripe for such a gathering and instinctively interested in its discussions. The event has shown that the congress was held at the right time, in the right place and on right lines. All over the world there is a great stir of thought on the subject of education and a deepening conviction that the question of moral education is the heart of the educational problem of our time. Side by side with the strengthening of national self-consciousness there has been a growing eagerness on the part of each nation to learn from the educational experience of other peoples. In England, along with much inertia on the subject of national education, there has always been a strong belief (far from always translated into practice) that the main purpose of educational effort is to help in the formation of upright character. The demand for the supply, at public expense, of those kinds of education which enhance industrial and commercial efficiency, though never without its active champions among us, has always left the masses of English people somewhat cold. The advocacy of schemes of educational reform intended to recast at the public cost our system of schools upon lines congenial to political democracy has not yet succeeded in arousing any remarkable demonstrations of popular sympathy. The English are an odd mixture of democracy and feudalism; of new ideas and old traditions; of dislike of undutiful privilege and of limpet-like attachment to a system of vaguely outlined social groups. They do not

¹ "Moral Instruction and Training in Schools: Report of an International Inquiry." In two volumes. Vol. I, The United Kingdom; Vol. II, Foreign and Colonial. Sold separately. London and New York: Longmans, Green & Co.

² "Papers on Moral Education Communicated to the First International Moral Education Congress, 1908." One volume. London, David Nutt.

take kindly to plans of educational reform which ignore their social presuppositions. But to one appeal they have always been willing to respond. They believe in character. And they value any kind of education which imparts strength of moral principle and makes for integrity and "straightness" in practical life. Accordingly, English opinion welcomed with almost unexpected warmth a congress which put the question of moral training into the forefront of educational aims. And it heartily approved a plan of debate which gave a fair field and no favor to different convictions and secured opportunity for the expression of different forms of tested educational experience.

In three points the congress, perhaps unavoidably, fell short of complete success. There were too many subjects in the program. At only two or three of the sessions did the speakers come to close grips upon matters of crucial importance. And American experience was inadequately represented in the debates. These defects could not well be avoided. One chief purpose of the first congress was to present a wide survey of the whole problem under review. Hence the too congested program. Secondly, it was impracticable for the chairman to ignore the claims of previously appointed speakers and to allow each session to take such a course as the spirit of the moment would have dictated, had the field been free. And thirdly, the time of year at which the congress was held was fixed by other engagements which could not be ignored, but had the unfortunate result of making it impossible for many of the American teachers and administrators, whose co-operation would have been most valued, to attend the gathering.

II.

Three episodes at the congress stand out, in retrospect, as having been of especial significance. The first was a short debate as to the degree in which the great English public schools foster a sense of civic obligation. The

second was a conflict of view as to the value of systematic courses of direct moral instruction as helps in the formation of right principles of conduct. The third was a discussion, on Monday morning, September 28, as to the relation of religious education to moral education. A brief account of these three episodes may be acceptable to those who were not able to attend the congress.

1. The educative value of the corporate life of the school was fully recognized by many speakers in the course of the discussions. In an educational gathering held in England, it was appropriate that stress should thus be laid upon the powerful influence which may be exerted in the formation of character by the responsibilities and collective duties imposed upon its individual members by a school community which is wisely organized, morally healthy, largely self-governing and not too closely watched. Eighty years ago, at a time when the rapid growth of the factory system and of competitive industry threatened to make untrammelled individualism too self-assertive in English life, Thomas Arnold of Rugby and several of his contemporaries developed the restraining and moralizing power of such a school community. Most potent in its influence was the corporate life of such a wisely disciplined but largely autonomous school community when the latter was set (as at Winchester and Eton) among surroundings which appealed to the sense of beauty and to the historic imagination. England, the radically minded pioneer of the factory system, has at the same time been one of the most conservative of all countries in her higher educational tradition. The idea of the school community is a medieval idea adjusted to modern needs. It was no accident that, as an antiseptic to the dangerous germs of selfish individualism among those classes in England which were rapidly rising to wealth and social influence, Arnold of Rugby and his contemporaries thought it well to use, in English secondary education, the power of corporate life. They believed that such corporate life was an important

factor in moral training and in the formation of character. At Winchester (oldest of the English public schools) and at Oxford (most ancient of the English universities) Arnold had learned the power of collegiate life, the educative influence upon one another of young people living together in a community which appealed to their loyalty and to their sense of corporate responsibility. In English educational history during the first half of the nineteenth century, the determinative facts were the self-reform of ancient collegiate bodies and the consequent survival of the semi-autonomous medieval institutions which French revolutionary influence swept away in most other parts of Europe. The renaissance of the great English public schools, due in large measure to Arnold's personality and courage, marked an effort to withstand the disintegrating influences of an excessive individualism, and a desire to bring the future leaders of competitive industry and commerce under the spell of an educational ideal which inculcated the duty of self-abnegation to the claims of the community.

Since Arnold's time the great English public schools have laid the nation under a heavy debt of gratitude. But the best proof of their living power is the readiness with which many men who have spent a lifetime in their service admit the comparative failure of the English public schools to rise to the full measure of their new and changing opportunities. On Saturday morning, September 26, Sir Arthur Hort, a Harrow master, and son of a great English theologian, submitted in grave and temperate language a point of great importance for the consideration of the congress. Admitting to the full the value of the English public-school system in training the power of administration and government, acknowledging that by the system of self-government the English public schools habitually remind "unthinking boyhood that the tone of the community is only a general impression of the character of the individuals who compose the community," Sir Arthur proceeded to state that it is "un-

deniably disappointing" that the sense of corporate life once gained in such a miniature society does not more often develop into civic patriotism in after life. He thought that, in the majority of cases, the English public-school boy did not afterwards turn out a good citizen, so far as the responsibilities of municipal and local government were concerned. He asked for suggestions toward a solution of this difficulty: Why does not the training for social responsibility within the microcosm of school-community life bear larger fruit afterwards in a spirit of enlightened service toward the local community as distinct from the larger service of Parliament, government administration or the empire? Sir Arthur Hort was inclined to think that the fault did not lie in anything which the public schools did, but rather in something which they left undone. But he did not believe that any abstract or theoretical teaching of the duties of citizenship could replace the present performance, on a small scale, in adolescence, of duties identical in kind with those which fall to the adult man.

Up jumped Dr. Hayward in reply. The public schools which Sir Arthur Hort represented were in bondage to a false philosophy of education. They thought that if you trained the "faculty" of loyalty to school duties you would find that faculty exercising itself in the necessarily different circumstances of adult citizenship. What was wanted in the public schools was the more definite teaching of a social ideal applicable to modern political conditions.

An old Rugby boy, Mr. G. L. Bruce, who has done excellent service in London education, continued the debate. He traced the weakness to which Sir Arthur Hort had called attention to a different source, namely, to the exclusiveness of the English public-school system. The boys were segregated from the community. During the critical years of education their sympathies were not rooted in local life. They were trained apart in communities which had no intimate relationship to local duties

and local government. The result was that they produced a patriotism which was a class patriotism.

Professor Muirhead pointed out that the criticisms made by Dr. Hayward and Mr. Bruce were in fact complementary to one another. The great public school was a boarding school. We should all welcome, therefore, the strong efforts which were being made in many quarters to infuse the day secondary school (whether for boys or girls) with the same spirit of corporate unity which had been the strength of the great public boarding school. To carry forward into the day-school work of the present the best tradition of Arnoldism was one great task of English educators to-day. But in order that the boys and girls might have insight into the meaning of the social duties which awaited them, and might learn how to apply their education to the tasks of modern government, local and central, it was desirable that there should be more definite instruction in economic and social questions, provided that such instruction were well adapted to the age of the pupils and to their intellectual and moral development.

On this point I venture to quote a passage in the introduction to the recently issued "Report of the International Inquiry into Moral Instruction and Training in Schools (Vol. I, pp. xxxviii-xxxix):

Systematic and practical instruction in social and economic questions seems to be still surprisingly infrequent in our great public schools, although the older boys are admittedly well able to make good use of it. In view of the responsible duties which lie before them in later life, such instruction, if given in a suitable form, would be especially appropriate to their needs. Head masters and governing bodies might with advantage encourage some of those whom they propose to appoint to their staff of teachers to undertake a special course of preparation (practical as well as theoretical) for the work of giving accurate and stimulating instruction on the methods of local and central administration, and upon the real working of our social and industrial organization. What the pupils want is a course vivid with practical experience, and full of sound history and competent economics. The important thing is to kindle their interest in scientific methods of social investigation, and to make them see that the problem of social reform is very urgent and very complicated; that ill-formed or partisan talk merely darkens counsel; and that it will be both dis-

creditable and unfortunate if, through lack of intelligent study and investigation, the more leisured classes in England find themselves obliged to leave the intellectual lead on social questions in the hands of men and women whose educational opportunities have been far narrower than their own.

2. In England, during the last three years, there has been sharp conflict of expert opinion as to the usefulness of systematic courses of direct moral instruction in the formation of character and in the imparting of a choice-worthy ideal of life. The one view is that moral thoughtlessness may be corrected by definite moral instruction; that "evil is done from want of thought as well as from want of heart;" that good conduct is in great measure the outcome of a clearly apprehended moral ideal; and that, for the building up of such a moral ideal, the imparting of clear moral ideas is both desirable and necessary. The other view is that to prescribe systematic courses of moral instruction for children is to impart prematurely adult moral conceptions into the minds of children whose own moral life ranges in another sphere; that it is only too easy to get children "to repeat and memorize adult language with fidelity," but that such parrot-like or adult-approbation-seeking repetition is no proof of real moral growth, and may be prejudicial to it; that abstract thinking in morals should follow concrete experience, and may be precociously stimulated; that by putting morals into a separate compartment we may detach morality from the real business of school life; and that it is perilously easy to set up in words a moral standard which the teachers' deeds belie or which the unreformed social evils in the children's home life may reduce to bitter irony.

I submit that some of these sharp differences in opinion spring from an almost unconscious divergence in educational ideals. In educational thought at the present time there are two divergent ideals of the work of a school. The first pictures to us a highly trained, Herbartian-minded instructor directing from his desk the

intelligence and aspirations of a diligent and well-disciplined class sitting in rows before him in the classroom. The other ideal conceives of the school as a community which (to quote Kinglake's words in "Eothen") "buzzes with life"; which is educating itself through bearing responsibilities; which is busy with practically educative tasks; which is full of freedom and initiative; which is getting experience of the labors and relationships which lie at the foundation of all human society; which is dynamic, self-expressive and busy with efforts to accomplish (under the unobtrusive guidance of tactful teachers) certain things which its individual members wish to accomplish and in which, therefore, they find a strong motive for effort. The first of these views finds its most distinctive examples in the ordinary school practice of France and Germany, and in such methods of the English elementary school as have been borrowed from continental precedents. The other view has been presented with persuasive skill by Professor John Dewey, and has been most elaborately realized in the University Elementary School at Chicago, in the Normal School at Hyanis, in Dr. Reddie's school at Abbotsholme, and in the Landerziehungsheimen, founded in Germany by Dr. Lietz. Teachers and students who incline to the first of these two educational ideals instinctively turn to methods of moral instruction which repel and irritate those who incline to the second. Both agree in thinking that one main purpose of the school is to kindle high ideals. Both are convinced that schools should try to influence conduct and to impart a higher ideal of life. But methods of moral teaching which seem appropriate and even axiomatic to the one may seem pedantic and (in the literal sense of the word) preposterous to the other. Those who conceive of the school as a directly didactic institution naturally turn to systematic courses of direct moral instruction as an appropriate addition to the present curriculum. Those, on the other hand, who distrust any excessive development of the didactic work of a school;

who think that all true education is a fostering of growth from within, and that (in the words of Lafcadio Hearn) "education only develops the preëxisting," shrink with horror from the premature introduction of abstract moral teaching as likely to produce unreality of feeling and double-mindedness in conduct. But may we not say that each of the two conflicting ideals of education outlined above holds part of the truth, and that neither, in its extreme form, is really applicable to all the needs of children and adolescents? Do we not discern a possible synthesis between what is sound in each of the two views? Should it not be our aim to combine the two educational doctrines and to blend a considerable measure of constructive work and of self-directing activity with the more abstract and didactic part of school instruction? Toward such a synthesis the deliberations of the congress seem to point.

3. From the memory of those who were present, there will not easily fade the recollection of the candor and intense reality of the discussion which took place at the congress on the relations between religious and moral education. In the gaunt shed which, for the present, serves as the great hall of the university, there were assembled on the morning of September 28, representatives of the great religious bodies and of those organizations which, detached from older dogmas, are striving for the furtherance of the good life. Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Independents, Wesleyans, Quakers, Positivists, Unitarians, Ethical Culturists, Rationalists of all shades had come together for a momentous debate. Six speakers, Father Maher, S. J.; Mr. Edward Lyttelton, head master of Eton; M. Ferdinand Buisson, of Paris; Mr. John Russell, of Hampstead; the Anglican Bishop of Southwark, Dr. Talbot; and the Anglican Bishop of Hereford, Dr. Percival, made the most important contributions to the discussion. Their sincerity, their charity, their modesty of utterance, their respectful regard for opposing convictions produced throughout the session a

feeling of reverence, of noble toleration and of spiritual awe which left upon those present the impression that they had listened to the unfolding of sacred experiences rather than to any clash of contending faiths. This is not the place in which to attempt to summarize all that was said or implied in the speeches. A verbatim report of the discussion will shortly be published by the committee of the congress (office, 13 Buckingham Street, Strand, London, W. C.). But perhaps a few words which fell from the Bishop of Hereford at the close of the debate best describe the impression which it produced: "Every one amongst us feels that he or she is set in the midst of what we call the Infinite. It is impossible, therefore, fully and adequately to train any individual without what we term the religious element. We are naturally religious; we are inevitably religious. But that is no reason why we should not concentrate our attention in our school relationships with the young upon what we term fundamental morality. A considerable section of this meeting is inclined to deprecate the introduction of religious instruction into our schools. On that I say nothing but this: That the religious teacher and the moral teacher have the same need, the same end, which is to build up conduct and character and good purpose in the child. They have the same need of an atmosphere and of a tone in the school; and the atmosphere and the tone of the school depend upon the personality of the teacher. The teacher will give forth from his or her personality what lies at the root of it. So long as we have religious teachers we may be content. We might even be content, in that case, with only moral teaching in our schools because there would also be religious teaching, passing out unconsciously but inevitably from the personality and example of the teacher. I would venture as an old man to suggest to the young teachers who are enthusiastic for moral teaching and afraid of religious teaching, that the difference between moral teaching and religious teaching might be expressed by the difference

between the circle and the parabola. In the circle you confine yourself to what is within a certain limited boundary. In the parabola you have on one side this same limited boundary, but on the other it reaches out to the infinite. Inasmuch as you have to deal with individual minds and imaginations—souls, if you will—which are reaching to the infinite in all directions, you cannot separate these two. But the one thing you have to remember is that out of your own personality will come the influence with which you mold the child. And so, whether we are teaching religion or teaching morality, let us remember that in the teaching of these things the best of our teachers will rise till they touch the spheres.”

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SELF-ESTEEM AND THE LOVE OF RECOGNITION AS SOURCES OF CONDUCT.

H. H. SCHROEDER.

ONE of the most important sources of conduct is to be found in the feelings aroused by what we think of ourselves, and by what we care for what others think of us. The social environment in which we live approves of certain types of conduct, while it disapproves of others; it places a valuation on certain capacities and qualities, while there are other characteristics that it just as positively condemns. The thought that we are possessed of qualities that have value in the eyes of our fellows, or that our conduct has been meritorious, is a source of pleasure to ourselves rather than of indifference or of displeasure, we have a “feeling of pride”; contrariwise, the thought that our conduct in any matter has been unworthy arouses a painful feeling, we are ashamed. The habitude that is fostered by these particular pleasurable